

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

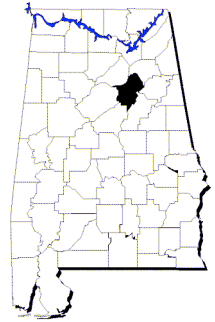
Honorable Philip K. Seay

St. Clair County Courthouse
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Pell City, AL 35125
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Mary Lou Street
Scott Bonk
Baron Sandlin
Gloria Craig
Judy Glenn
Dionne Dempsey
Betty Bryant
Reggie Parker
Mary Cooskey
Sally Albis
Cherlyn Fagan



Council Priorities

1. All residence of St. Clair County will be safe.

Reduction of availability and use of drugs will reduce not only adult but juvenile crime throughout the county.

2. Highly involved and effective parents of children in St. Clair County.

Effective parents should maintain a favorable attitude toward their children's pro-social development. i.e. high school graduation, drug free life style, employability.

3. Education parents and community on recognizing delayed development and resources available for children.

Early identification of children's needs will prevent academic and social problems in their future.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Enhance literacy for all children in St. Clair County

Action Steps

- 1) Advocate continued implementation of the "Imagination Library" throughout St. Clair County.
- 2) Advocate increased communication and support between the public library system and school systems within St. Clair County.
- 3) Advocate increased awareness of the St. Clair County Literacy Council with citizens of St. Clair County.

Lack of skills to be successful in school

Action Steps

- 1) Encourage the placement of "Success by Six" in St. Clair County.
- 2) Make parenting programs available to "high risk" parents.
- 3) Encourage admission into Head Start programs at age 3.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Children receiving AFDC/TANF - improving support systems for families in St. Clair County

Action Steps

- 1) Continue to improve child support collection through agency efforts and increase community awareness.
- 2) Improve employability of custodial parents through increased referral for assessment and basic skills training.
- 3) Improve transportation for AFDC/TANF recipients through a coordinated effort involving volunteers, agencies, and business.

Children in poverty - improving economic security of families in St. Clair County

Action Steps

- 1) The percentage rate of children living in poverty correlated with the school dropout rate. Reduce school dropout rate by increasing commitment to school through mentoring, parental involvement tutoring, etc.
- 2) Develop and support a direct relationship between industry and vocational training in St. Clair County (apprenticeships, cooperative learning, on the job training, etc.)
- 3) Encourage all agencies to notify their clients about WIC (food assistance for children 0-5), if income eligible.
- 4) Advocate for social workers in all schools in St. Clair County to evaluate and appropriate referrals for children and families in need.
- 5) Increase participation in free and reduced cost meal programs for children and teens that are income eligible in St. Clair County schools.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Drop-out rate - decreasing the percentage of students leaving the educational setting

Action Steps

- 1) Advocate assigned personnel within each school system to track academic student progress through court appointed program.
- 2) Advocate funding for academic interventions for grades 7-12.
- 3) Advocate continued funding of school nurses throughout St. Clair County through the St. Clair County Health Authority in order to decrease absenteeism due to illness.
- 4) Advocate continued funding for school base prevention program.

Child abuse and neglect

Action Steps

- 1) Seek out funding sources for teen pregnancy programs.
- 2) Apply for grant funding and implement program.
- 3) Educate school nurses & counselors regarding availability of programs (BEAR Facts) and encourage referrals as quickly as possible.
- 4) Encourage county agencies and faith-based organizations to implement programs that prevent teen pregnancy.

Increase student awareness of educational offerings

Action Steps

- 1) Advocate developing an awareness of vocational education among junior high school students within St. Clair County.
- 2) Advocate career day functions among all junior high schools within St. Clair County.
- 3) Advocate the establishment of scholarships in the areas of vocational training for graduating seniors among the high schools located in St. Clair County.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Children and youth of St. Clair County engaging in at risk behaviors

Action Steps

- 1) Collect and analyze data to determine areas of need for prevention services.
- 2) Develop awareness of research-based programs designed to prevent risk taking behavior.
- 3) Implement research-based programs designed to reach targeted populations of at-risk youth.

Lack of healthy living habits including nutrition and physical activity among St. Clair County children and youth

Action Steps

- 1) Collect and analyze data to determine the need for programs designed to promote healthy living among children and youth.
- 2) Develop awareness of healthy living (i.e. nutrition & physical activity).
- 3) Implement programs designed to reach targeted populations.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Lack of effective parenting skills - parenting of adolescences 11-18

Action Steps

- 1) Continue to expand Parent Project Sr. in St. Clair County.
- 2) Continue to promote community and agency awareness of Parent Project.

Lack of effective parenting skills/parents of children 0-10

Action Steps

- 1) Implement Loving Solutions program. (Parent Project Jr.)
- 2) Bear Facts for families (at risk teenage mothers).
- 3) Promote community and agency awareness of Loving Solutions and Bare Facts.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Child abuse and neglect - promoting a decrease in the number of children who are abused and neglected through support groups for parents

Action Steps

- 1) Develop and maintain on going support groups for parents to reinforce skills presented through programs such as intervention and parenting classes.
- 2) Disseminate the information of the support groups to the referral sources for parents needing help with the application of information provided through the various classes.

Children living in homes where domestic violence occurs

Action Steps

- 1) As a support group for children was developed in 2003, continue to recommend judicial referral of age appropriate children to the "Kids in Crisis" group as a part of the disposition of any court action.
- 2) Continue to promote the dissemination of information about the support group throughout the county to promote awareness of the issue and encourage referral of children to the group.

Policy Recommendations

- Early intervention: identification, assessment referral visitation, parent education.
- Early childhood education (Early Start, Even Start, First Steps, Success by Six, Head Start, etc.) Bear Facts for Families.
- Prevention programs designed to address substance abuse, school dropout, and teen pregnancy.